

1815

TO DEATH

William Cullen Bryant

Bryant, William Cullen (1794-1878) - American poet and editor of the New York Evening Post who practiced law before devoting his life to writing. A master of blank verse, Bryant's earliest works are considered his best. To Death (1815) - Opening lines: Oh, thou whom the world dreadeth! Art thou nigh, / To thy pale kingdom, Death to summon me?...

TO DEATH [WRITTEN IN 1815]

Oh, thou whom the world dreadeth! Art thou nigh,
To thy pale kingdom, Death, to summon me?
While life's scarce-tasted cup yet charms my eye,
And yet my youthful blood is dancing free
And fair in prospect smiles futurity.
Go, to the crazed with care thy quiet bring;
Go to the galley-slave who pines for thee;
Go to the wretch whom throes of torture wring,
And they will bless thy hand, that plucks the fiery sting.

I from thine icy touch with horror shrink,
That leads me to the place where all must lie;
And bitter is my misery to think
That in the springtime of my being,
I Must leave this pleasant land, and this fair sky;
All this hath charmed me from my feeble birth;
The friends I love, and every gentle tie;
All that disposed to thought, or waked to mirth;
And lay me darkly down, and mix with the dull earth.

THE END